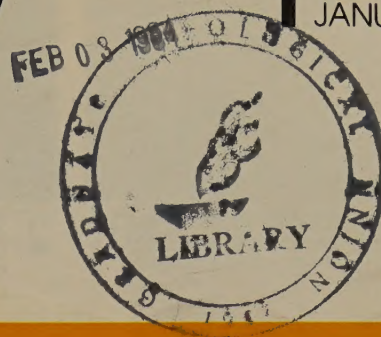


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VOLUME 23
JANUARY



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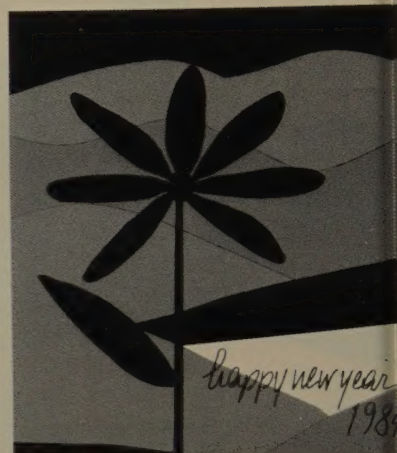
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Living City is published 11 times a year (10 monthly and a bimonthly issue in August-September) by the Focolare Movement, a non-profit corporation, P. O. Box 496, New York, NY 10021.

Subscription prices for one year: USA and possessions: US\$12.75; Canada: US\$15.00; Elsewhere: US\$18.00; Air Mail (all countries): US\$25.00.

An envelope is enclosed in each magazine for subscription orders and inquiries: LIVING CITY, P. O. Box 126, Jamaica, NY 11415.

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OF THE FOCOLARE MOVEMENT
MAGAZINE**

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loo Road 11 B/F - Kowloon - Hong Kong

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OTHER ENGLISH EDITIONS:
1. "New City" - 57 Twyford Avenue - London W3
- England
2. "New City" - P. O. Box 332 - Manila, Philippines
3. "New City" - 367 Balwyn Rd. - Balwyn North
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Towards a new human community

For one full month bishops from all over the world gathered in Rome to study the theme "Reconciliation and Peace."

The Sixth General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops began on September 29, 1983 with a solemn Eucharistic concelebration in St. Peter's Basilica presided over by Pope John Paul II. For a month the 221 participants of the Synod would discuss the theme "Reconciliation and Penance in the Mission of the Church."

The General Secretary of the Synod, Archbishop Jozef Tomko, during a press conference on September 23, explained why this theme had been chosen. "It is the result of consultation with the Bishops' Conferences and other episcopal organizations throughout the world which began immediately after the last synod in November 1980. From 186 proposals, two principal groups of themes emerged: around the Church under various aspects, and around the sources of the life of faith (sacraments, liturgy, Word of God, prayer). A careful collegial examination made by the fifteen cardinals and bishops who make up the 'Council of the General Secretariat' of the Synod was able to perceive a widespread aspiration to the spiritual renewal of the Church through the interior renewal of man and society, which was best expressed in the proposed theme, immediately approved

by the Pope... It gathers together man's most profound aspirations to interior and exterior liberation from the chains of sin, to the renewal of society on moral bases which begins precisely with the renewal of man's heart and conscience, and which finds the means and special help in the Sacrament of Penance."

Dynamics of preparation

Once the theme had been chosen the dynamics of preparation began. A document which outlined the principal ideas and various questions on the topic was circulated. During the second phase a "working document," enriched by the ninety-six answers coming for the most part from the episcopal conferences but also from lay associations and movements, was prepared. In January 1983 it was sent with a letter written by John Paul II not only to the delegates to the Synod but to all the bishops in the world so that it could be used as a pastoral aid during the Holy Year of the Redemption. Among other things the Pope wrote in his letter the following: "Reconciliation is simply the Redemption that the Father has offered to every human being in the death and resurrection of his Son. And he con-

continues to offer it today to *all* sinners, as he awaits, like the father in the parable of the prodigal son, their repentant return through conversion."²

In the letter written to the bishops the Pope synthesized the two preparatory documents: "At the root of the moral evils that divide and wound society is sin. Thus the whole of human life is seen to be a struggle, often a dramatic one, between good and evil. Only if the roots of evil are taken away can true reconciliation be attained. And so personal conversion to God is at the same time the best path to lasting renewal of society: for in every act of true reconciliation with God through repentance there is intrinsically present the social dimension, side by side with the personal one."³

"The Church's mission," Archbishop Tomko explained during the press conference, "is to proclaim, administer, effect reconciliation which begins in the heart but which is manifested in our life style and in the work of reconciliation in society. The Sacrament of Penance is the primary instrument of man's reconciliation with God, with others, with himself. The work of reconciliation in the various areas of life and society begins

through the fundamental conversion of the heart."⁴

The work of the Synod began on September 29 with reports on the activity of the Secretariat during the three years since the last Synod and the effects of the previous Synod on marriage and family apostolate in the various countries. The following day, September 30, the 'Relator', Cardinal Carlo Martini of Milan, delivered the principal theme to be discussed.

down, they ardently aspire. "The fundamental aim of the Synod," said the relator, "is precisely to clarify and probe, in the light of faith, on a doctrinal and pastoral level, the connection existing between the personal reality of sin and the many moral evils that afflict our society; to reflect on the most effective way to bring man, in today's social context, to practice penance and to achieve reconciliation."⁵

"Reconciliation is simply the Redemption that the Father has offered to every human being in the death and resurrection of his Son."

Aim of the Synod

The theme could be reduced to three fundamental points: the relationship between sin and the tensions and divisions in the contemporary world; the need for change of heart to effectively overcome them; the Church's duty to bring the men and women of today, by heartfelt conversion and penance, to a reconciliation to which, deep

The questions to be discussed dealt on a theological order with sin and its nature, and on a pastoral level with the correct and effective celebration of the Sacrament of Penance. They covered such topics as the relationship between individual sin and the evils which affect the world; the personal and social dimension of sin and also the correct conception of freedom.

"The true concept of freedom," Cardinal Martini underlined, "(is) that which takes man away from the delusions of a false autonomy, showing him the possibility of recovering the true state as a child of God. The correct celebration of the Sacrament of Penance constitutes a privileged place for education to this freedom."⁶

Penance and the Eucharist

In a summary of his talk published in the *Osservatore Romano* English Edition⁷ important points were underlined concerning the pastoral character of the Sacrament of Penance, "in particular in relationship to the Eucharist; to individual confession and to communal sacramental celebrations; to general absolution; to the celebration of Penance for venial sins and finally to the training of confessors." On the Sacrament of Penance in relationship to the Eucharist, two points were brought to light in a particular way: "the reconciling efficacy of the Eucharist derived from the fact that it is the sacrament of the real presence of Christ and renews his redemptive passion and death. At the same time, the need for the Christian who has fallen into serious sin to receive Penance before approaching the Eucharist is reaffirmed."

In the sessions following the reading of the theme the Synod Fathers offered eight-minute reports which outlined the situa-

Message of the Fathers of the 1983 Synod of Bishops

The human heart cries out unceasingly to be freed from its anguish and to find fulfillment.

Assembled from all parts of the world, we the bishops of this synod, together with our Holy Father, are one with you in your pain and in your hope.

With sadness we have considered those evils in our world which are denying people the possibility of the true liberation and the fullness of human life. In particular we deplore and condemn:

- the deprivation of human rights and attacks on the freedom of individuals, on the life and liberties of the powerless;
- the obstacles to religious freedom which prevent believers from fulfilling their duties and carrying out their tasks;
- all racial discrimination;
- warlike aggressiveness, violence and terrorism;
- the building up of arsenals of both conventional and especially nuclear arms and the scandalous trade in all weapons of war;
- the unjust distribution of the world's resources and those structures whereby the rich become richer and the poor poorer.

In our world injustice abounds and there is little peace. Yet hope can never be extinguished. In the depths of this suffering, the human heart never ceases to long for life and love.

And yet the human heart is divided and sinful. From it have sprung too often the cruelty and injustice of our society.

The word of God speaks to mankind about its pain and its hope. It calls us to repent and to turn back to God. The word of the Lord at the beginning of his ministry of reconciliation is addressed to believers and unbelievers with a special urgency in this Holy Year: "Repent and believe in the good news" (Mk. 1:15).

That word calls us to repentance and a change of heart, to seek forgiveness and so be reconciled with the Father. The plan of the Father for our society is that we should live as one family in justice, truth, freedom and love.

The word of God will lead us into the mystery of God's love for us and so to an understanding of the Gospel precept of the Lord to love God in return and our neighbor as ourselves. Then, together with the whole church, we share the mission given to us by Christ to create a civilization of love by healing, reconciling and making whole a divided and broken world. But first

of all, as Christians, we ask forgiveness for our failures and sins, the causes of many divisions.

Pastors and people together carry out this mission in the name of Christ. Like him we identify with the poor, the suffering, the oppressed, with all humanity. The whole world must become increasingly a reconciled community of peoples.

The Church, as sacrament of reconciliation to the world, has to be an effective sign of God's mercy. It is in the sacrament of reconciliation, especially, that we celebrate and receive God's forgiveness and know his healing love. The sacrament restores and deepens personal friendship with God and frees us for his service.

Furthermore, prayer, fasting and almsgiving, together with faithfulness and patience in bearing the trials of daily life, are all necessary for growth in personal holiness.

To this generation the Holy Spirit speaks with remarkable force. It is a call to radical spiritual renewal and to unity in faith. The Second Vatican Council makes clear what must be done to fulfill God's plan for his people in our time. To carry out this mission we have to be one in mind and heart. Within our own Church we call for greater harmony. We urge all the baptized to discover together the way forward to visible Christian unity by abandoning themselves to the truth of the Gospel. We shall collaborate with other religions and persons of good will for the good of humanity. We do not make this appeal in our own name: "We are ambassadors for Christ; it is as though God were appealing through us, and the appeal that we make in Christ's name is: be reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20).

The Church will work to heal the divisions and tensions of the world. We shall be tireless in the search for peace and disarmament and the reduction of tension, particularly between East and West. We have no political power but we can voice to the leaders of states the anxious longing of their people for a safer, more peaceful world.

The Church can never rest content with economic and political structures which perpetuate injustice. We shall use, for example, what influence we have to achieve effective reform of the inequalities which exist between the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.

The Church, and especially through the voice of the Holy Father, has consistently called for justice and peace in our society. The Synod recognizes that many have the will to achieve change but not the power. We call on those who have the power to summon up the necessary will to give us a more just and peaceful society.

L'Osservatore Romano, English Edition October 31, 1983

tions, experiences, problems and proposals of their various continents, races and cultures. During the second week, smaller language groups were formed to facilitate a more thorough discussion of the principal problems presented by Cardinal Martini in a second report. At the end of this week all the participants returned to the plenary session and a spokesman from each group reported the results of its work.

Preparation of proposals

The third week was dedicated for the most part to the proposal of conclusions and the drawing up of a Message of the Synod Fathers (see insert), fruit of much reflection and study on the part of the bishops during the days of the Synod. The sixty-three "proposals," voted on during the fourth week, describe the renewal of pastoral action on the part of the Church in the field of reconciliation. In the words of Cardinal Joseph Cordeiro of Karachi, "The Message is an appeal from the Synod to all people in the Church and in the world at large for reconciliation. It is an appeal to a world threatened by great dangers and torn by divisions of many kinds, social, political, ideological and economical. The Message is addressed in a language which we hope all will understand. Besides reconciliation, the Synod calls for penance and self-denial. This appeal is

directed in the light of a consumerism which is spreading throughout the world and which almost automatically leads to selfish attitudes ... The need for reconciliation and penance is for all people. And the call for the renewal is in-

assembled in the Synod to guide them in their deliberations. Let us pray that the Synod itself, held in this Jubilee Year of Redemption, will help all consciences to recover the sense of God and the sense of sin, to understand

great concern expressed by many of the Bishops — world peace. Most Rev. Stephen Hamao, Bishop of Yokohama Japan, described the relationship that exists between this concern and the theme of the General Assembly when he stated in his intervention, "Peace is another name for reconciliation."

"Peace is another name for reconciliation."

spired largely by a realization of the loss of the sense of sin in the world of today. But this loss of the sense of sin is itself due to a loss of the sense of God, his presence and his activity in the world and in the hearts of men and women."

Also in the fourth week the Synod Fathers elected the members of the Council of the Synod Secretariat, three from each continent, who remain in office until the next General Assembly.

Participation of John Paul II

Pope John Paul II followed the Assembly with great interest, attending many of the sessions and speaking on this topic in his homilies and general audiences, constantly drawing the attention and prayers of the Universal Church to this important event. During a general audience on Sunday, October 5, he appealed to the faithful to "ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen the pastors

the greatness of God's mercy and the importance of the Sacrament of Penance for the growth of Christians, for the spiritual renewal of the Church, for the moral healing of society."⁸

"If it is true," he had stated earlier in his talk, "that 'every evil intention springs from man's heart', then it is also true that this heart is capable of listening to the Father's voice, of seeking and obtaining forgiveness, of rising again to new life, of renewing itself and the environment around it."

He concluded the Sixth General Assembly on October 29 with a speech in which, among other things, he stressed the importance of the Synod as an institution in the Church today: "The Synod of Bishops is a particularly precious manifestation of the episcopal collegiality of the Church, and one of its most effective instruments."⁹

In his speech the Pope also touched upon another area of

Concern for the international situation.

"The international situation is very tense," the Pope affirmed in his talk, "and I am also very troubled. The Church must commit herself to use every means at her disposal to ward off the dangers which menace world security and solicit the leaders of the nations resolutely to address themselves in the directions which lead towards a guaranteed and stable peace."

"... I sent a personal message to the Presidents of the United States and of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union, asking them not to discontinue negotiations as the only way to settle growing disagreements or the conflicts of interest and to put an end to the arms race, which keeps the whole of contemporary humanity in apprehension. In this field the Church has an acute awareness and never ceases to announce the message of justice and peace in a manner proportionate to the needs and the threat of the contemporary world."¹⁰

The Pope then called upon the Synodal community to work to prepare the Church, through the intercession of

Mary, the mother of Christ, to "receive the Holy Spirit: Spirit of Conversion and Spirit of Peace. Like the Apostles in the cenacle we also join in fervent prayer with the Mother of Christ and the Mother of the Church. We feel a particular need for her intercession regarding these deepest problems of the dimension of human consciences and contemporaneously of the problems which weigh upon the horizon of the life of the entire human family, as a painful burden of our times.

"Only in the Church of Christ, through the intercession of his mother, can this burden become 'easy and light'. It can rest on the shoulders of man, like the weight of salvation and the sign of hope."¹¹

Post-Synod begins

The Sixth General Assembly of the Synod concluded but the work was really just beginning. All the material worked on during the Synod, the reports of the different working groups and the Bishops proposals, were given to the Pope for the preparation of a future 'conclusive' document. Bishop Antonio Quarracino, president of the Latin-American Bishops' Conference, offered these reflections on what he hoped were the fruits of the Synod and the probable course of action of the bishops as they enter the post-Synod stage. "I would like very much to think that the words of the Synod might move the hearts of those in power—heads of nations and politicians—to the point that they would decidedly begin to seek out

ways of reconciliation, justice, peace and freedom. I am not saying that it will happen like this, in fact, I'm afraid it will not; but at least I can affirm that the Church has fulfilled its mission to proclaim reconciliation and unity, forgiveness, penance and peace which at this moment is very much endangered.

"The Pope has in his hands a large amount of very precious material which he knows how to utilize. The Bishops, those who participated in the Synod and those who did not, together with priests, will try to bring to the faithful, with clarity and strength, the new understandings on reconciliation and penance in Christian life brought about as a result of the Synod. I feel sure that im-

the sacramental ministry of reconciliation, they will become more deeply aware of their task as 'good pastors' and 'fathers of souls'.

My hope is that there will be a reciprocal 'drawing near' to the sacrament. On one side the ministers of the sacrament will be encouraged to devote more time to it, to be more open in listening, more prudent in advising, more 'fatherly' in welcoming and understanding the faithful. The faithful, for their part, will participate in the sacrament in greater numbers, with greater hope, with more trusting humility and joy.

Then we will see even more clearly the great advantage of this sacrament in Christian life

*"To this generation the Holy Spirit speaks
with remarkable force. It is a call
to radical spiritual renewal and to unity in faith."*

mediately we will see in the Church a common effort to re-evaluate the pastoral aspect of the Sacrament of Confession. Its catechesis will be subject to deeper studies, it will be presented in all its positive aspects and priests will understand with greater clarity the greatness of this ministry, generously dedicating more time to it since the sacrament of forgiveness is also the sacrament of sanctification and, most likely, in the exercise of

and how important it was to have celebrated the Sixth General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on a theme which is so relevant to the life of the Church and of humanity."¹² □

1) *L'Osservatore Romano* English Edition, 3 October 1983, page 10. 2) *Idem*. 3) *Idem*. 4) *L'Osservatore Romano* English Edition, 3 October 1983, page 10. 5) *L'Osservatore Romano* English Edition, 10 October, 1983, page 4. 6) *Idem*. 7) 10 October, 1983, page 4. 8) *Idem*, page 1. 9) *L'Osservatore Romano* English Edition, 7 November 1983, page 3. 10) *Idem*, page 2. 11) *Idem*, page 3. 12) *L'Osservatore Romano* - Supplement, 31 October, 1983 (own translation).

CHIARA LUBICH ANSWERS

*The following Questions
and Answers are excerpts
from the book
"An Interview with Chiara
Lubich" by William Proctor
published by
New City Press, New York,
publishing house of the
Focolare Movement.*

Question: In the light of your own personal experience, and from the experience of others you have known in the Focolare Movement, how would you define spiritual maturity?

Answer: As Christ living permanently — insofar as that is possible here on earth — in the Christian.

Question: What helps us mature spiritually; and what are signs or marks of spiritual maturity?

Answer: The sign is one's love of neighbor. From how much a person loves his or her neighbor, you can see how much he or she loves God. To go back to the other question, love of neighbor is what helps us to become mature, because love of neighbor makes our love for God grow. St. Teresa of Avila, whom you probably know of, and St. Catherine of Siena, both of whom are Doctors of the Church, were also convinced of this.

The deeper a plant sends its roots into the earth, the higher it grows. Similarly, the more Christians "make themselves one" with others, the more they love others, the more their love for God increases. This was our experience from the very beginning.

The Lord was strongly urging us to love our neighbor, to love Jesus in him or her. We tried to live like this all day long, making ourselves one with all the persons we met, sharing their joys and their sufferings, making ourselves one with their aspirations, and so on. As a result, when evening came and we recollected ourselves in prayer, we began to experience a certain union with God, even though we

were at the beginning of our spiritual life.

Thus we experienced that love of neighbor makes our love for God grow. It is a wellspring of union with God.

Question: Do you sense any tension between being the leader of a large movement in the Christian Church and trying to lead a genuine, humble, Christian life yourself?

Answer: No, because my primary concern is not so much to lead, as to teach by example. And this prompts me, with the help of God's grace, to live an ever more authentic Christian life.

Question: A great deal is said in and about the Focolare Movement with regard to love and expressing love. I wonder if you could define what love is?

Answer: Love is the mark of a Christian, the specific characteristic of Christianity.

Question: Can you give an illustration as to how one might express love?

Answer: The cross. Jesus expressed love, dying for us on the cross.

Question: If you were trying to tell an ordinary person, Christian or non-Christian, exactly what love is, what illustration would you use? Would you say it is a feeling? Or is it something which is expressed in action? Or both?

Answer: Love is, above all, sacrificing oneself for others; but it is also a sentiment. It is also the



effort to make oneself one with the will of another, to make one self one with the other. A prototype, on a human level, that could be a symbol of divine love is a mother's love. A mother is filled with the sentiment of love and her life is characterized by much sacrifice for her children. She is the one who most understands her children and tries to make herself one with them. God has a love of this kind, but, his is much greater.

Question: Do you expect the Focolare Movement to live on after you're gone?

Answer: Certainly I do. Perhaps not exactly as it is now, but it will certainly live on. Our strength lies in establishing the presence of Jesus in our midst. The mutual love among the members of the Movement, which leads to unity, brings about this wonderful reality. Jesus is there



where two or more are united in his name, which means united by his love. If, in the future, Jesus is always present among the leaders of the Movement, and in our Focolares, our Gen units, the nuclei of the Volunteers, and in all our communities and families, he will be their light, he will lead

them on. In fact, even now, he is the one who gives life to our Movement, who sustains it and leads it, because with his presence he enlightens us, purifies us, sanctifies us, spurs us on.

Question: What gives you the greatest happiness now? I mean, you seem to be a happy person anyhow, but is there something which gives you more happiness than anything else?

Answer: The moments of greatest happiness in my life are the moments in which, because of God's grace, I realize how much he loves me.



CYRIEL, the pilgrim

From Rome direct

by ORESTE PALIOTTI

A pilgrimage on foot from France to Rome to commemorate the Holy Year.

Over the centuries countless pilgrims have flocked to the Eternal City. Once there was a man who came on foot all the way from France. A piece of bread and some herbs were all he needed for food, a corner among the ancient stones of the Colosseum was enough to lay his head to rest. His outward appearance fell considerably short of pleasant, but this "Hobo of God" possessed a charity and sanctity of life which would soon be recognized by the entire Church. His name was Benedict Joseph Labre' and he died in Rome exactly 200 years ago.

As far as I can tell there have always been "odd" kinds of people roaming the streets of Rome: vagabonds and derelicts who often seem swallowed up by the colorful, noisy groups of tourists. Everytime I see one of these vagabonds I wonder what kind of person lies beneath that often sloppy appearance — a drifter, a thief, or a saint like Benedict Labre' — someone, in short, who doesn't just happen to be in Rome but is here for a deeper spiritual reason.

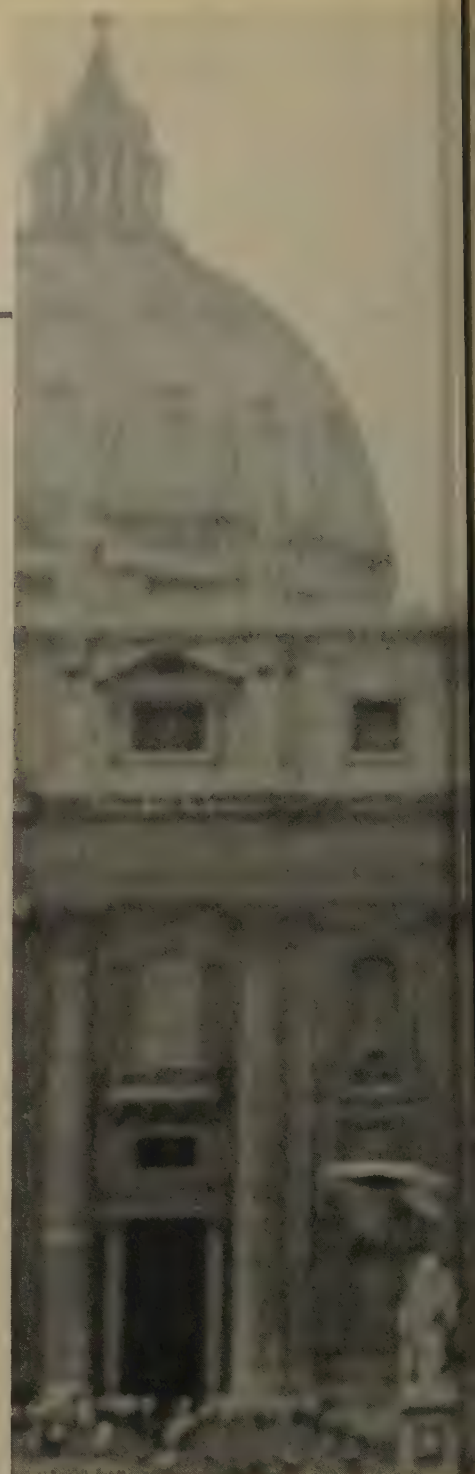
Cyriel, for instance, who is twenty-four years old, with gray-green eyes illuminating a pensive, earnest face, has nothing of

the appearance of a hobo even though his jeans and T-shirt are somewhat threadbare. Yet he certainly doesn't look like a tourist either. Our meeting reveals that he's a true pilgrim — one of the old-fashioned kind who make their way on foot. To him, it seems like nothing out of the ordinary, but it doesn't happen every day to meet someone who has covered something like 1,000 miles on foot to come to Rome — not for sports, or to set a record of any kind, or to win a bet, but simply and exclusively for God, in response to his call.

Actually this was not the first time that Cyriel had undertaken such a pilgrimage. Last year he started out from Ghent, his home in Belgium where he worked as a mechanic, and biked his way first to Lourdes, then to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, and finally to Fatima; all this with hardly a dime in his pocket.

"That one, in a way, was a pilgrimage of 'reconciliation' with Mary, our Mother," he explained, "while this one to Rome is meant to be for reconciliation with Christ — without forgetting Mary of course. I prayed to her, in fact, saying, 'I'm not asking you for anything; you already know all my needs'. And always,

in the most critical moments of my journey, I found a helping hand to give me a little money, food or hospitality. It usually wasn't very much but it was enough to get me through the day. Once I even found a bag of provisions and even some money which maybe someone had dropped from a car window. Things like this happened all the time, and I know it was Mary who was making the journey a little easier





Cyriel Eloot, the young man from Belgium whose story we are reporting on these pages, journeyed from France to Rome on foot to celebrate the Holy Year.

for me; it was she who protected me on many occasions.

But let's start at the beginning. Cyriel first had the idea for this pilgrimage while spending a period of time in the Benedictine Monastery in Fontgombault in

central France. He recalled, "One day I was listening to the radio and I heard the solemn proclamation of the opening of the Holy Year. I was struck by the power of the Pope's voice when he pronounced Christ's words: 'Repent and believe the good news.' It was as if these words were addressed to me personally, and I felt the irresistible call to make my way to Rome on foot. I said to myself 'It's now or never!'

What better occasion would I ever have to walk with Christ in his poverty and suffering?"

Cyriel started out in the Spring of '83, Easter Monday. Heavy and constant rain made his trek to the Italian border that much more difficult but, as he recalls, "It certainly was the best way to 'wash away', right from the beginning, any 'romantic' notions I might have had about this trip." He took with him only the bare



Cyriel in front of the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. His extraordinary pilgrimage lasted five months and seven days.

essentials in clothing, and just enough food for the first few days. He carried with him the Gospel and a few books for spiritual reading, but no road maps.

"I had no precise itinerary; sometimes I wasn't even sure I was headed for Rome," he said. "I planned to cover about thirty miles a day and each day as I started out I tried to listen to God's voice deep within me, to understand what his will might be for me."

The main stop-off points of his journey were the Abbey of Taize in Lyons, France, the town of Ars, and Grenoble. Then he crossed the Alps and stopped in several Italian cities — Turin, Pavia, Cremona, Mantova, Padova, Ravenna, Pesaro and Ancona. He spent three days in Loreto and two days in Assisi and then travelled south to Norcia, Cascia and finally Rome.

"I reached Rome on August 11 five months and seven days after my departure. I was exhausted, covered with dust and sweat, my feet were full of sores and I had less than three dollars in my pocket. I went immediately to St. Peter's but it was evening and the Basilica was closed. So I spent the night on a park bench and returned the following day."

The trip had been full of difficulties galore — exhaustion and rain, cold and heat, hunger and thirst and, on top of that, there were nights when clouds of mosquitoes made sleep impossible, just when he badly needed rest in order to resume his march the following day.

"But the most difficult thing for me to overcome was the way I was treated at times by people who perhaps mistook me for a trouble maker," he told me. "I was treated with contempt and derision, not so much in words as in their attitude towards me. But I tried to accept these humiliations with joy; it was all part of the experience. Often it was much easier to find a rapport with the simple, country people I met along the way. I didn't know them but often they took a real interest in me, treating me like one of the family and offering me a place at their table and a bed for the night. From these experiences I learned not to judge a person from the outside but to try and discover the person 'inside'. I realized that often a humble appearance disguises a real treasure.

"I also met people along the way who, learning about the purpose of my journey, would have

liked to join me. But I felt that I had to make this trip alone, that it was the moment to seek a deeper union with God inside. Often I had a hard time concentrating on praying as I went along. I would say words, but they seemed empty to me. It was not the kind of prayer I had been thirsting for.

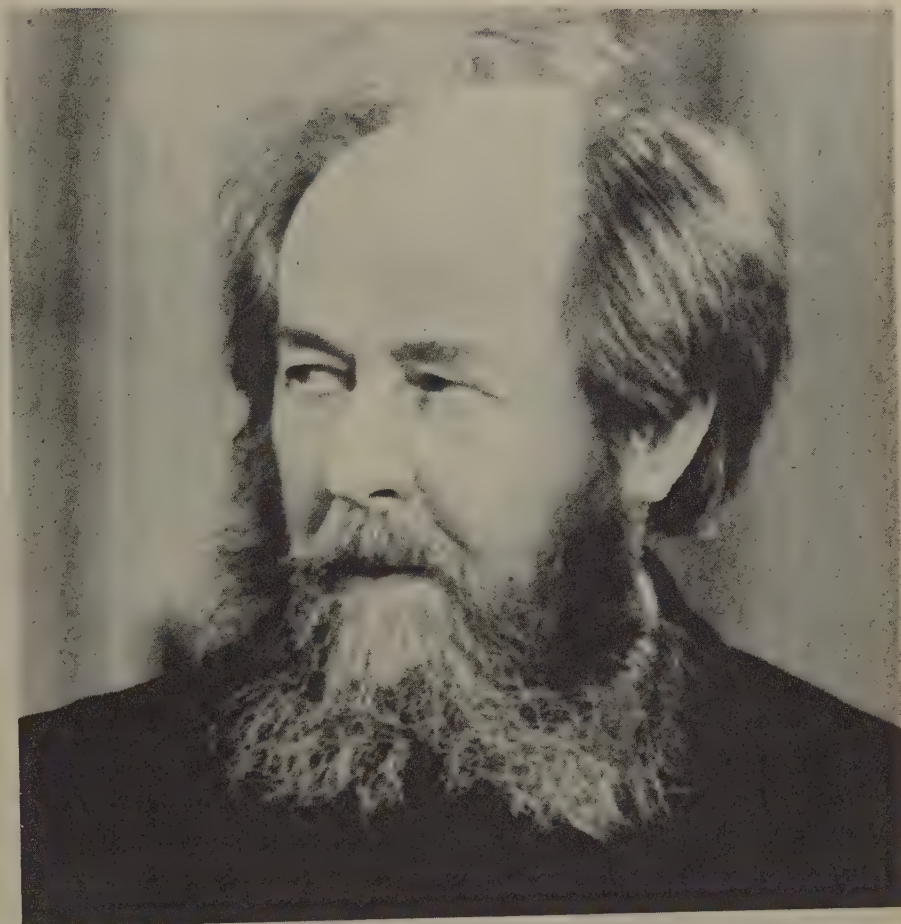
"But as the days passed, this difficulty finally left me and union with God came about by itself, perhaps it was a 'reward' for my efforts at not worrying about the future, but only living the present moment, making myself poor of everything and putting all my cares in Christ. I remembered the words that had fascinated me as a little boy, 'Don't worry about your life and what you are to eat ... Look at the birds in the sky ... Set your hearts on His kingdom first ... and all these other things will be given you as well.'

"In my small effort to live this way I saw that, besides all the material things I needed, I also experienced the constant presence of Christ, his peace, the joy of not having any possessions except him, my traveling companion in life. This, I think, is the real fruit of my pilgrimage."

Soon Cyriel will return to France. Perhaps his inclination to silence and a more intense life of contemplation will lead him to join the Trappists in the Monastery of Sept-Fons. "I am open to the will of God," he shared, a readiness you could clearly see in his eyes. As we said good-bye, I had the feeling that I had met a person who was truly free.

TEMPLETON PRIZE TO SOLZHENITSYN

Alexandr Solzhenitsyn is the most recent winner of the prestigious Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion. The famous Russian writer and dissident, author of "Gulag Archipelago" and "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich," now resides in the United States.



by CLAUDIO CASOLI

The Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion, awarded to persons of different faiths and nationalities, was most recently awarded to Alexandr Solzhenitsyn noted Russian writer, exiled from the Soviet Union in 1974 for acts of dissidence.

In past years the prize has been awarded to such personalities as Mother Teresa of Calcutta; Brother Roger Schutz, Prior of Taizé; Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, former President of India; Chiara Lubich, founder of the Focolare Movement and Rev. Nikkyo Niwano, president of the buddhist lay association the Rissho Kosei-kai.

Alexandr Solzhenitsyn was born in Kislovodsk in Russia in 1918. He graduated from the University of Rostov with degrees in physics and mathematics. He served in the Red Army rising to the rank of Commander of an artillery battery that fought at the Leningrad front during World War II. He was wounded several times and decorated twice for valor. In 1945 he was arrested at the Russian-German border for having written a letter which contained a derogatory comment on Stalin. He was convicted and sentenced to eight years of hard labor in Siberia. In 1970 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature but was not able to attend the acceptance ceremony. He had become Russian's most famous dissident and in 1974 the Soviet Union revoked his citizenship and deported him. After two years in Switzerland he came to live in the United States.

His works include: "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich"; "Cancer Ward"; "The First Circle"; "August 1914"; "Gulag Archipelago"; "Lenin in Zurich."

For the theater he wrote: "Candle in the Wind"; "Violence and Peace"; "The Oak and the Calf."

At present he is writing a new book entitled "The Russian Wheel" a history of the Russian Revolution.

REACH FOR THE WARM

On different occasions Mr. John Templeton, an American, has been asked to explain his reasons for establishing the Templeton Foundation prize. In one such interview he explained: "I was concerned because many of my friends had no interest whatsoever in religion and I felt that they should be made aware of it and be more interested in it. One way could be that of giving publicity to those persons who are in the world and who are trying to do something new in the field of religion ... This is the purpose of this prize, to acknowledge these people who have brought about new ways of loving God and our neighbor."

Why was Solzhenitsyn chosen for the prize? A panel of judges had recognized his contribution to "progress in religion" as one of vigorous defense of the four foundations upon which religion and democracy rest: fidelity to justice, to truth, to conscience, to freedom. In his acceptance speech at Guildhall in London, Solzhenitsyn specified what he felt this contribution had been in a talk entitled "The World in Pieces" (see insert). He affirmed that both the East with communism and the West with consumerism were guilty of having betrayed these pillars of faith and democracy, even though in very different ways, and that a decisive "repentant return of our consciousness to the Creator of all" offers the only possible exit from the dead end which many have predicted lies ahead.

For Solzhenitsyn, this conclusion is certainly the fruit of a deep personal experience. He was reared in the Eastern Orthodox

An extract from Alexandr Solzhenitsyn's address in Guildhall, London, May 10, 1983.

It seems more and more apparent that even with the most sophisticated of political maneuvers, the noose on the neck of mankind draws tighter and more hopeless with every passing decade, and there seems to be no way out for anyone — neither nuclear, nor political, nor economic, nor ecological. That is indeed the way things appear to be.

Before the mountains, nay, the whole mountain ranges of such global events, it may seem incongruous and inappropriate to recall that the primary key to our being or non-being resides in each individual human heart, in the heart's preference for specific good or evil. Yet this remains true even today, and it is in fact, the most reliable key. The social theories which have promised so much have demonstrated their bankruptcy, leaving us in a dead end. The free people of the West could reasonably have been expected to understand that their environment includes numerous freely nurtured falsehoods, and not to allow lies to be foisted upon them so easily.

All attempts to find a way out of the plight of today's world are fruitless without a repentant return of our consciousness to the Creator of all. Without this, no exit will be illumined, and we shall be unable to find our way. The means we have left for ourselves are too impoverished for the task. We must first recognize the horror perpetrated not by some outside force, not by class or national enemies, but within each of us individually, and within every society. And particularly in a free and highly-developed society, for in that case we have surely done everything by ourselves and of our own free will. We ourselves, in our daily unthinking selfishness, are pulling tight that noose.

Church which has at the center of its spirituality the mystery of the Risen Christ, an eternal sign of hope. Eight years of hard labor in a work camp in Siberia, where he experienced hunger and personal degradation, strength-

ened and clarified this belief: "either people live with the certainty of being children of God or they are inevitably lead to create a hell on earth for themselves and to drag others like themselves into it as well."

AND OF GOD

Let us ask ourselves: Are not the ideals of our century false? And is not our glib and fashionable terminology just as unsound, a terminology which leads to superficial remedies being proposed for each difficulty? In every field of endeavor they all must be subjected to a clear-eyed review while there is still time. The solution of the crisis will not be found along the well-trodden paths of conventional notions.

Our life consists not in the pursuit of material success but in the quest of worthy spiritual growth. Our entire earthly existence is but a transitional stage in the movement toward something higher, and we must not stumble and fall, nor must we linger fruitlessly on one rung of the ladder. Material laws alone do not explain our life or give it direction. The laws of physics and physiology will never reveal the indisputable manner in which The Creator constantly, day in and day out, participates in the life of each of us, unfailingly granting us the energy of existence; when this assistance leaves us, we die. In the life of our entire planet, the Divine Spirit moves with no less force: this we must grasp in our dark and terrible hour.

Instead of the ill-advised hopes of the last two centuries, which have reduced us to insignificance and brought us to the brink of nuclear and non-nuclear death, we can only reach with determination for the warm hand of God which we have so rashly and self-confidently pushed away. If we did this our eyes could be opened to the errors of this unfortunate twentieth century, and our hands could be directed to set them right. There is nothing else to cling to in the landslide; all the thinkers of the Enlightenment can give us nothing.

Our five continents are caught in a whirlwind. But it is during such trials that the highest gifts of the human spirit are manifested. If we perish and lose this world, the fault will be ours alone.

He quotes Dostoyevski: "Horrible events could happen for which our intellectuals will not be prepared." And this, Solzhenitsyn states, is what has happened. It is written that the world will be saved after having

been visited by an evil spirit. "But!" Solzhenitsyn offers, "will it be saved? It depends on our conscience, on our clarity, on our individual and collective efforts in a catastrophic situation. One half of the prophecy has already

come about. A wave of evil has disrupted the continents ... each country is going its own way, but today, all are quickly reaching the threshold of a common end."

Is there any hope? Solzhenitsyn answers: "Instead of the ill-advised hopes of the last two centuries, which have reduced us to insignificance and brought us to the brink of nuclear and non-nuclear death, we can only reach with determination for the warm hand of God, which we have so rashly and self-confidently pushed away."

The writer now lives privately in the United States in a converted farmhouse to which he has added a small chapel. There he alternates his work with meditation such as the one that follows: *How pleasing it is to live with you Lord! How easy it is to believe in you! When my spirit yields and no longer understands, when those more intelligent cannot see beyond the end of the day and ignore what they must do tomorrow, You send me the splendid certainty of your existence, of your concern that the doors to good never close. Having reached the crest of earthly glory, I look back with amazement at the road I have traveled, one which I would never have discovered on my own; an unexpected road which you have lead me along through the emptiness of hope, to this place from which I have been able to send back to humanity the reflection of your rays. And you will continue to let me reflect them, in the amount that is needed. And if I will no longer have time you will entrust others with this task.* □

REDISCOVERY OF RAPHAEL

*We have reached the close of the fifth
centenary of the birth of Raphael.
Heinz Pfeiffer, Professor of Art History
at the Gregorian University in Rome
answers some questions
on the many conflicting opinions
about this famous Renaissance painter.*

In speaking about Raphael over the centuries, criticism has varied from 'hosanna' to 'crucifixion.' How does one explain these ups and downs in judging his art?

Down to the 18th century Raphael was highly praised. I think this was because he knew how to unite, in a suitable formula of the highest pictorial standard, the ancient classical sensitivity with the Christian faith. What was appreciated in his work at that time was his capacity to represent the complexity and richness of Catholic culture with such simplicity of expression that anyone, however uncultured, might say that if he had known how to paint he would have done so in the same manner.

With the decline of Catholic culture, with the Age of Enlightenment, with the French

Revolution and secularism, the art of Raphael was no longer seen as a model of unity between religion and classical culture. It became valued solely as classical art. Hegel said: "The Zeus of Phidias and the Sistine Madonna of Raphael are grandiose works and we admire them; but we no longer genuflect before them." Thus, a basic aspect, essential for understanding him was cancelled from his art: the profound Christian roots from which he drew his inspiration.

Later, the catastrophes of two World Wars provoked a new shock, and art since then has expressed the dramatic human situation that went hand-in-hand with these tragic historical events. The exponents of classical culture, and Raphael in particular, could no longer be understood in a Europe which had lost the ideals by which

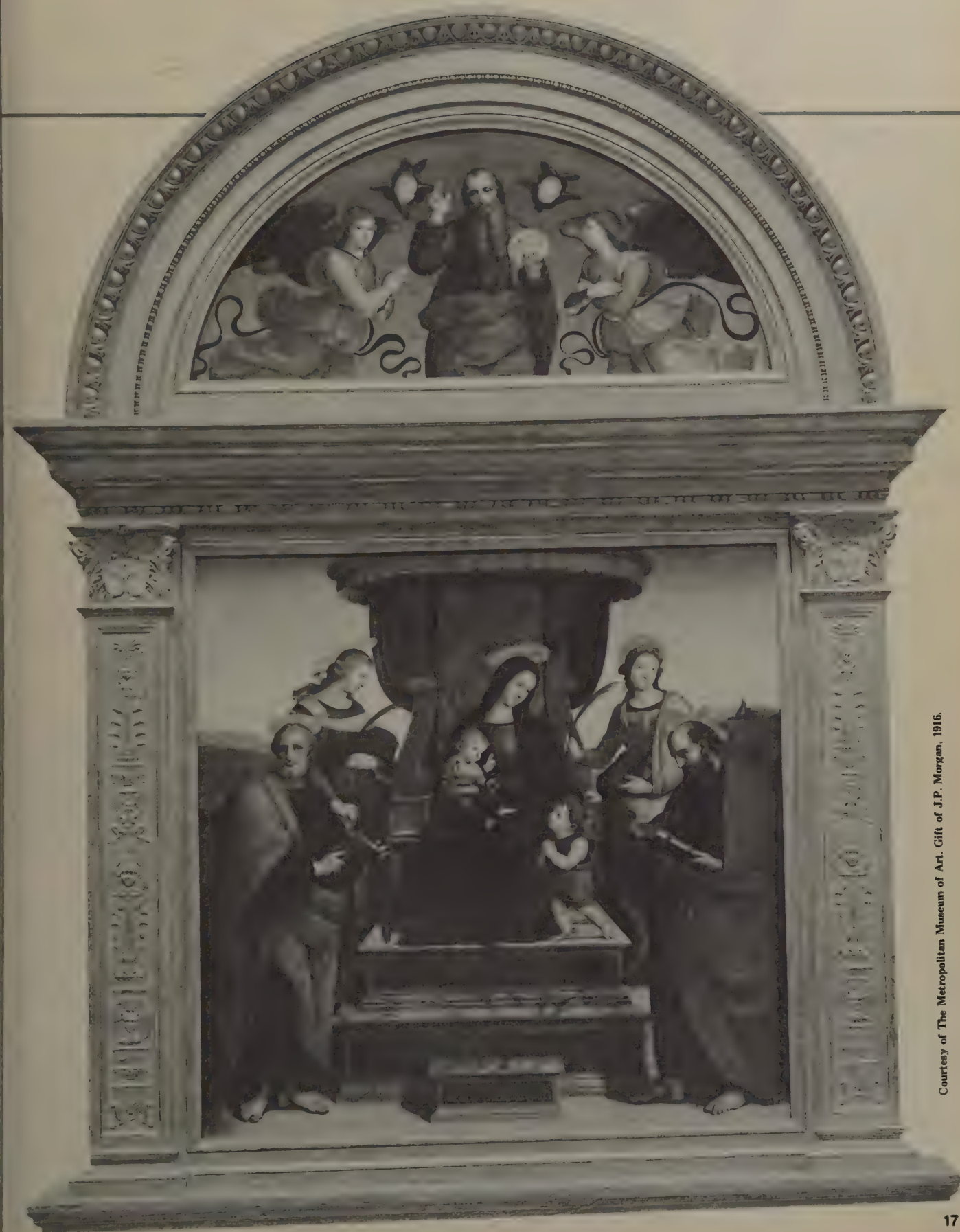
those artists were inspired, ideals of beauty seen as harmony. This explains, in my opinion, the spreading of an anti-Raphael critique.

There are those who would hold that the famous Madonnas of Raphael are not simply Madonnas but idealized portraits of beautiful ladies with their children. What in reality did Raphael mean to portray?

It is precisely because our prevailing culture is not permeated with faith (even

(Continued on page 18)

RIGHT: Raphael's *Madonna and Child enthroned with Saints Catherine, Peter, Cecilia, Paul and the infant Saint John the Baptist. In the lunette, God the Father and angels. It is the altar piece for the Convent of Saint Anthony of Padua, Perugia.*



Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Gift of J.P. Morgan, 1916.



The Agony in the Garden by Raphael.

Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
Anonymous Fund, 1932.

by the fact that the many reproductions and imitations of his works do not have the capacity to express the non-visible world through harmony as he knew how to do.

Things that are too well known have to be rediscovered. Today however, when the pictures of Raphael are reproduced less frequently, I am convinced that anyone who stands in front of the originals in silence and without prejudice cannot but rediscover the artistic values they contain; nor can anyone deny that their maker was one of the greatest artists not only of Italy but of the whole world. I believe that the young especially can understand Raphael since they are less influenced by critics of a certain previous secularistic culture who had earthly beauty alone as their ideal.

One last question about the famous portraits that Raphael painted of people in his own day. It is said that he improved on the features of his models. Why? To flatter his patrons? Or did he perhaps actually see them like this?

Portraiture was born about a century before this time and it had become in his time one of the most important responsibilities of the painter. Whoever could, had a portrait made, just as we have photographs taken. And for this they sought out the greatest masters and Raphael was among them. He had grown up at the court of Urbino and had learned noble and courteous manners there from childhood. When he did a portrait he deliberately tried not to be too realistic so as not

(Continued from page 16)

when "baptized") that it does not know how to distinguish between a painter in whom the naturalistic element predominates and one in whom the spiritual does. And the works of Raphael are of the latter type. Only in his Roman days however, in the last phase of his life, did he base some of his Madonnas on real models. Before that, they were inventions of his imagination. His art is tied to Flemish realism but it is founded on a vision of reality which today eludes most people. Let me explain: to express the religious, the invisible, that we know only by faith and not through the eyes or by reasoning, we need to find symbolic forms of representation. The artists of the Renaissance always sought more and more to eliminate this symbolism, which was felt by them to be in contrast with nature; all that is symbolic was hidden and no longer expressed openly — we need only think of Michelangelo who eliminated the wings in his images of angels.

Raphael, the painter of harmony, expressed it through the perfect symbolic form of the circle. Consciously or not we do not know, but he used it as no other artist has done in planning the structure of his works; be it the head or the position of a person, it was always within a circle. By this perfect form which underlies his compositions and does not appear obviously, he gives spontaneity to his figures. Another way of representing perfection for him is that perfect balance between colors which is one of the secrets of his art. These elements (especially the former), which are always present in his Madonnas, elude us today: for example we no longer know how to read the circle as a symbol of perfect harmony, a heavenly one such as does not exist on this earth.

These suggestions, among the many one could make, tell us why we no longer know how to fully value the art of Raphael. Especially in regard to his Madonnas, he has been harmed

The painter of harmony

On Good Friday 500 years ago Raphael was born in Urbino, Italy, and on Good Friday thirty-seven years later he died in Rome, the last of the four most important steps of his very short life: Urbino, Perugia, Florence and of course Rome.

Urbino was one of the leading cultural centers, not only of Italy but of Europe. Painters came from Spain, like Pedro Berruguete, or from Flanders, like Giusto di Gand; they worked beside Piero della Francesca and Melozzo da Forlì and formed, with poets, architects, philosophers and mathematicians an illustrious circle around the Duke of Montefeltro who gave to the little city surrounded by mountains the splendor of a court of the Muses. Raphael's father, Giovanni Santi, a painter, was drawn into the stylistic trends of Piero della Francesca and Melozzo da Forlì and was active in that artistic circle of Urbino, later introducing into it his son. At twelve years of age Raphael lost his father, his mother having died four years earlier.

The Umbrian master Pietro Perugino, into whose studio he was introduced, influenced the young painter more than anyone. Then, towards the beginning of the new century, Raphael began to work for himself. We find him at Città di Castello and, along with Pinturicchio in Siena. About 1505 he established himself in Florence where he studied the works of Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci and made friends with the painter-monk Fra Bartolomeo. The influence of these people is clearly revealed in his works.

During his years in Florence, Raphael developed two themes in particular: the portrait and the Madonna. Among the most precious and esteemed of his works were his drawings, always much sought after and now dispersed in great private and public collections all over Europe. Those from his Florentine period display the spirit of inquiry of the young master who continually improved on his compositions with ever-new variations.

The great enterprises of Pope Julius II (the construction of the new basilica of St. Peter and the rebuilding, enlarging and beautifying of the Apostolic Palace) attracted Raphael to Rome. And through the mediation of Bramante, a distant relative, he was given the task of collaborating in the frescoes of a room in the new Papal dwelling.

Later, towards the end of 1509 we find him at work in the so-called *Stanza della Segnatura*. It did not take long for the Pope to be convinced of his extraordinary talent for he then dismissed the other painters entrusting to Raphael alone, young as he was, the responsibility of painting all three of the rooms. And these frescoes, together with those of Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel, are considered to be the most significant painted works of the whole 16th century in Rome.

In the first and second decades of the century, there was a flourishing circle of poets, philosophers and theologians. Raphael knew how to give artistic expression to their ideas. He frescoed their chapels, painted their portraits, and exchanged letters with them.

Always more and more in demand the master had to organize a large workshop with many pupils and collaborators who themselves later became famous: Giulio Romano, Francesco Penni, and Pierin del Vaga.

After the death of Bramante, Raphael succeeded him as architect for the building of St. Peter's. It would seem that he aspired also to the Cardinal's hat but this is not altogether certain. The same applies to the story of his relationship with a beautiful Roman lady, afterwards called "La Fornarina," a story told by Vasari thirty years after the painter's death. In fact, clear information about his private life does not exist. And his few poems refer to divine love in the Neo-platonic sense.

On the other hand there is one aspect of his activity that is well-documented. Leo X had entrusted him to carry out, at least on paper, the reconstruction of Ancient Rome. To this he applied methods that were ahead of their time, already formulating certain modern principles of archaeology; meticulous exactness about details in the study of monuments, the method of comparing them with others of the same period and with what could be learned from literature. To such a degree was his research relevant, that when he died he was mourned less as a great painter than as a great scholar of antiquity.

For his tomb he himself chose the most beautiful chapel in the Pantheon. There he was buried after a sudden death, leaving unfinished one of his great masterpieces, the Transfiguration.

H. P.

to be discourteous. This sensitivity came to him from his upbringing.

But there is something deeper here. Many of his portraits were done in Florence, and the most relevant philosophical current there was neo-platonism in which the outward appearance, did not count so much as the essence of reality. Plato placed in heaven the perfect form of every being and

St. Augustine made Christian this vision of reality. For him in God there is a perfect idea of everything, of every person; and in life each person's acts of virtue are a step towards this ideal. Since, because of sin, human beings cannot arrive at it by themselves, there must first be Grace.

Raphael had this vision of things, and his way of expressing Grace was through

harmony and beauty. One could, in this sense, define him as the painter of grace. In his portraits he often made his models appear more beautiful than they were in reality. This was because for him the art of portraiture was imitation, but not just of appearances; according to his understanding, a portrait must try and express that which is the "ideal" of the person, that person which one is "called to be." □

THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE

How did the Christians of the first centuries receive and understand the faith? Above all how did they come to accept the great, new, central reality of this religion — the God who is one and yet three? And what its consequences had to be in their personal and public life!

The following is a series of imaginary 'reports' from the life and times of the Apostles, in an attempt to reconstruct, in a vivid and contemporary way, the manner in which their vision of the God of Jesus, who is both Three and One, developed and deepened their appreciation of the relationship between God and mankind.

by SILVANO COLA

Jerusalem is swarming with pilgrims. Merchants, too, have crowded into the city, offering their many wares to the visitors. It is Pentecost — the great Festival which commemorates the Law being carved on stone by God himself, and then being given by him to Moses for the chosen people.

Jerusalem is their religious capital. It is also a cosmopolitan center, and the tempo of its life is enormously increased by the crowds.

Festive confusion is everywhere. In the squares, in the streets invaded by camels and donkeys, even in the Temple area the people are shouting.

Overhead the sky is clear; there is not a whisper of a breeze. Suddenly, in that part of the city where the Upper Room is located, where Jesus held his last supper, it happened!

Something like a tornado, followed by a clap of thunder, brings everything to a halt. The people are momentarily stunned.

Shortly afterwards — from this room, the cenacle — twelve men appear. They walk decidedly into the middle of the crowds and start proclaiming, like heralds, the marvelous works that God has done for his chosen people throughout the centuries.

They speak; and their speech is inspired.

"But isn't that one a fisherman?" someone says. "Where did he learn to preach?"

"And listen how well that Egyptian speaks," marvels another.

"Just a minute," intervenes a third, "You're mistaken. That man's a Galilean like me, and he's speaking the dialect of the fishermen from around Lake Tiberias!"

Close by, a merchant just returned from Persia with a consignment of prayer mats to sell at the feast — stops dead in his tracks and murmurs almost to himself: "How fantastic! I really would not have thought that one was a Persian!" Once again a stunned silence hangs

over everyone. The air is still again. People look at one another in bewilderment whispering, "Can it be true? How can everyone be hearing what they are saying in their own language? What's happening?"

Absolute certainty

From just outside the Temple a seller of doves, annoyed that his sales had suddenly fallen off, cries out:

"Let's keep it moving folks! Don't waste you time listening to those men; they've probably had too much wine!" No one takes any notice of him, and over and above his persistent shouting, another voice — belonging to Peter — clearly rings out. The tone is neither angry, nor resentful, but it certainly is very decided:

"Listen to me! All of you! These men," — and he indicates the other eleven men who are now standing around him — "these men are not drunk. It's much too early in the day for such things. We have something very important to

tell you; that Jesus of Nazareth — whom you took and had crucified — has been raised from the dead by God! And we are witnesses to that fact!" (There are gasps and whispers of wonderment everywhere.) "Are you amazed? All this is nothing but the work of the Holy Spirit whom that same Jesus received from the Father and which now he has poured out on us."

"I will repeat it again to you, and I say it with absolute certainty, the Jesus whom you crucified is the Lord, the Anointed Savior, who is seated at the right hand of God."

"If you want to be pardoned from your sins: if you want to receive the Spirit of God — you have only to receive Jesus as the Lord, and be baptized in his Name!"

There is silence for a moment as Peter finishes speaking. Everyone is spellbound by his words. All at once the crowd surges forward, convinced by Peter's words; a joyous pandemonium breaks out.

A Jerusalem that is "One in fellowship" is founded

That day other incredible things happen!

On hearing Peter's speech about three thousand people come forward, half emptying the square, and surround the Apostles, begging to be baptized and to begin a new life.

It is an incredible fact indeed; and yet ... from those three thousand people a new society has been born: a society with

such unique characteristics that it will survive for ever.

The internal barriers between nations collapse in this new fellowship of unity.

There is one who says: "Look! Those are Samaritans! Who would have believed that one day we would be breaking bread with them!"

"And the latest news is the most unbelievable of all! The Gospel is being accepted by the pagans! Paul has just made it known that the Spirit of God has even encompassed the uncircumcised and the pagan."

And so the News spreads.

Everywhere people are meeting together to keep fresh in their memory the death and resurrection of Jesus; and they share the latest reports of the conversions worked by the Holy Spirit, and by the preaching of the Apostles.

"I have just arrived from Ethiopia with a load of incense. I found out there that a high-up official of the Kandace — the Director-General of her Treasury, no less — has already been baptized by Phillip!"

"I've just been to Antioch and the Word has been proclaimed there, and a vast number have joined our faith: so many that a full community has been created there! That's the first one outside our country. Barnabas and Paul have gone there to instruct them, just as Jesus did with us.

And can you guess what the pagans are calling us? Christians — Followers of the Christ! Isn't that a splendid name?"

Our social order will be turned upside-down

There is always an atmosphere of joy. And, needless to say, there is always renewed amazement when we see slaves and their owners, housewives and philosophers seated at the same table. Outside our circle such a thing would cause scandal! Of course people say to us: "Are you mad? Where's your sense of honor? What's going to happen to your reputation? — your respectability? It's not necessary to demean yourself — putting yourself on a level with slaves. Can't you see that by what you're doing our whole social order will be turned upside-down: and the whole economy will go to the dogs."

Of course our reply is always the same:

"Don't you realize that Jesus has abolished these differences because he died for the rich and for the poor alike; for the humble as well as for the powerful; for the well-educated and for the illiterate; for men and for women? Jesus has revealed that we are all children of the same Father! And surely, among children in the same family there should be no differences! Don't you agree? Each one will be entrusted with a different task of course but we have all become one in Christ!"

Not everyone, though, finds it so easy to swallow that kind of unthinkable logic. Voices cry out: "These people are revolutionaries! How can we get them to keep quiet. Who is this Jesus anyway? Wasn't he some

sort of a fanatic? Why do they talk about him all the time?"

Martyrs and miracles

The other day a beggar who had actually been born lame, and was known to have been lame all his life, was begging as usual in front of the Temple. Suddenly he was made to walk and leap about? They say that it happened when someone called Peter said to him, "In the Name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene walk!"

The people were naturally very impressed. They even thought Peter was in some way divine, and were almost to the point of worshipping him! Peter shouted out, "If you really want to know, it was not I who worked this miracle! It is faith in Jesus, and his Name, that has set the man you all know to be lame on his feet again!"

This 'Name' is becoming a real mystery to everyone. Some people are saying that it was just by pronouncing it that Peter cured the paralyzed man in the City of Lydda, and raised up a young woman called Tabitha who lived in the region of Joppa. Peter is stating positively that there can be no salvation without belief in this 'Name.'

Tragedy outside the walls of the temple

A young Jew, though not a Palestinian Jew, but well thought of by the authorities, (apparently a follower of 'the Name'), was accused of having spoken against Moses, and against the Temple. Some say that the accusations were totally false, invented by people who

were envious because Stephen had also been working miracles. Just before the first stone was hurled he had the courage to shout out at the priests of the Sanhedrin: "You are stubborn people, always resisting the Holy Spirit! Even now I can see heaven thrown open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

Maybe they did not really understand these words: but they became very angry ... it could have been because when people looked at his face they said it was like looking at an angel! Nevertheless they stoned him to death!

Words and their meanings

This word 'the Name', let me explain ... normally, when we speak of the 'the name' of anyone we refer to the whole 'person' who bears that name. So far no problem. Take for example if someone speaks of 'Joseph of Arimathea.' Everyone understands that this, refers to one specific 'Joseph' and not to any other. Now comes the complication. When Christians speak of Jesus — unlike Joseph of Arimathea who was undoubtedly a good man — they mean a man who died on a cross like a criminal, came back from the grave and was seen by large numbers of people to be alive and still working miracles ... and then, who was seen going up into heaven and seen (by the same Stephen) to be at the right hand of God. Consequently it is enough for Peter or one of the Apostles to ask something 'in His Name' for the miracle to be as good as done!

So ... this Jesus ... has he the same power as God? Is he also God? The Apostle called John certainly considers him to be so ... but he has a strange way of putting it! He says that Jesus is distinct from God but is not a second God! Rather we are to think of him as the same God ...!

Let me try to make it clearer. When Pheidias, the famous sculptor, creates marvelous decorations for the Parthenon in Athens, everyone knows that Pheidias is a person, and a 'person' of genius who has created this, that and the other. But his 'creations' are not 'himself'! (And you can pray to them day and night but these sculptures, fascinating though they may be, cannot 'do' anything about it!)

But this Jesus — unlike Pheidias' creations — is not only "the expression" — "the Word" of the Father, but he is called "the Son" of the Father, and he works exactly like the Father. So he too is a 'person,' but, nevertheless, he said of himself ... "The Father and I are One!"

The Spirit of the Father.

But there is another matter, and it is no less strange! — 'the Spirit of the Father.' Now they call 'The Spirit' a 'he' (and he is not the Son — Jesus himself makes it quite clear when he speaks of The Spirit that 'he' must not be confused with himself. But here is the big complication: Jesus himself often speaks of his own spirit as though it were the same 'Spirit of the Father'). The Spirit of the Father also works:



Design by Paolo Strippa

"And the Christians themselves simply try to live as Jesus taught them."

for example, he descends on people who believe in Jesus and truly transforms them both inwardly and also in their way of living ... it is a change which everyone notices!

Nevertheless this 'Spirit of the Father' is recognized as a 'person,' and as distinct from the Father, and from the Son ... but equal to both of them!

Certainly it is difficult to understand what these Christians actually think. For example, are they still monotheists? That is, do they still believe that there is only one God? Or have they become polytheists like those whom they call 'pagans'? (In Rome, it is said, there is a temple called The Pantheon where they have gathered together a whole array of gods!)

So it really is a mystery! It's an astonishing thought — if someone wishes to become a Christian they take him down to the river 'baptize' him in the 'Name' (singular) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

But for the present only certain intellectuals among the Jews and Greeks and Roman are wracking their brains to understand something of this. And the Christians themselves — and that's the biggest mystery of all — simply "try to live as Jesus taught them" and they don't seem to worry excessively about all the various definitions. Their very life is lived within the mystery. They are like the child in the womb for whom there is no problem as to whether he is one with his mother, or is someone who is essentially distinct from her. □

WORD OF LIFE

**"And when I am lifted
up from the earth,
I will draw all men
to myself."**

(Jn. 12:32)

These words of Jesus are stupendous; in them lies the key to Christianity. They are being offered to all Christians as a topic for meditation during the week of prayer for Christian unity, 1984.

The Jewish feast of Passover was drawing near. In the crowds of pilgrims coming to Jerusalem there were also some Greeks who had asked to "see Jesus." The Disciples informed him and Jesus spoke about his imminent death adding that it would not cause the dispersion of his disciples as it might have been expected, but it would draw all to him. All, not only his own therefore, but whoever would believe in him, whether Jew or Greek: all people, without discrimination as to race, sex or social condition (cf. Gal. 3:28).

Christ's work of salvation is, in fact, universal and the presence of the Greeks is a sign of this universality. Their desire to see Jesus indicates that "the hour has come" for him to be "lifted up."

"And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself."

What does this expression "lifted up from the earth" mean?

To John the Evangelist it means both "being lifted up on the cross" and "being glorified." John sees in Christ's passion and death the full expression of God's love for humanity — a love so powerful as to merit the resurrection and bear the fruit

of drawing all people to him. Around Christ "lifted up on the cross" the unity of the new people of God would be built.

The cross therefore is no longer a sign of malediction and death. Jesus transformed it into an instrument of victory over real death which is sin.

The cross can no longer be separated from glory, and the Crucified Lord cannot be separated from the Risen Lord. We contemplate two aspects of the same mystery of God who is Love.

It is this Love which draws us to him. The Crucified and Risen Lord attracts us in the depth of our hearts in a deep and personal way. He calls us to share in his glory and, at the same time, he leads us to love everyone as he has done — to the point of being ready to give our lives.

"And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself."

How can we live this word of life? How can we respond to such immense love?

This month we will try to welcome into our hearts and put into practice the priceless teaching of the Crucified and Risen Lord. It will help us to understand more clearly the role of suffering in our lives and recognize its extraordinary fruitfulness.

Day after day, as we experience small or great sufferings — a doubt perhaps, or a failure, a misunderstanding, a strained relationship with someone, a difficulty at work, an illness, a misfortune or serious concern

— let us make the effort of accepting and offering them to Jesus as an expression of our love for him.

Let us add our little drop to the ocean of his passion for the good of many, of those who are dear to us, or for the good of the Church. Let us unite our suffering to his passion offering it for peace among nations and, in a special way this month, for Christian unity, or for any worthwhile purpose. Then, once we have made our offering, let us try not to dwell on it, but rather to go ahead doing what God wants of us wherever we are: at home, at work, in school... Above all let us try to love those around us, the neighbors we find next to us in the present moment of our life.

If we do this, we will experience an unusual and unexpected effect: our soul will be filled with peace, with love, with pure joy and with light. We may find in ourselves new strength. This experience will show us that, by embracing our daily cross and uniting ourselves through it to Jesus Crucified and Forsaken, we can participate in the life of the Risen Lord even while still on earth.

Enriched by this experience, we will then be better able to help our neighbor to find happiness amidst tears, to transform into peace that which troubles them. We will become instruments of joy and happiness for many, that happiness to which every human heart aspires.

Chiara Lubich

EXPERIENCES

The following
are experiences
in living the Gospel
which some of our readers
have shared with us.

WINNING THE BATTLE

I work in the management office of food services in one of the dormitories of a large university. Conflicts sometimes arise among the personnel and, as part of my job, I try to resolve these situations as best I can.

On one particular occasion a dish room worker made an appointment to "discuss" the problems she was having in getting along with her department head. She felt she was being treated unfairly and wanted management to do something about it immediately. My boss and I considered the problem. We knew we were in for quite a battle when we decided to call the two ladies in to discuss the situation.

About thirty minutes before the dreaded meeting I said a prayer that somehow this meeting would have good results and bring peace into the department. I remembered the word of life: "If there is one of you who has not sinned, let him be the first to throw a stone" (Jn. 8:7). My first inclination was to wish that these two ladies had the spirit of the word of life. Then I realized that I should be the one to bring it into their lives by my own actions. I was willing to try it; certainly none of our previous efforts had produced any lasting results. I felt the important thing, in order to live the word of life, was not to condemn, but to have mercy.

Well, the scheduled time for the meeting arrived and the dreaded battle began. I tried to

respond to the accusations with mercy and a deep concern for the feelings of both parties involved. As the discussion continued I was surprised to see both ladies lower their voices, and an understanding of each other's problems developed. They left the meeting feeling that management cared about the situation, and they resolved to try and work together in the future. Now it has been three weeks since the meeting, and the attitude of the two ladies has become much more positive. I can't help feeling it is because of trying to live the word of life.

J.S.

THE FIRST TO FORGIVE

One morning, Mary, my fourteen-year-old daughter came out of the bathroom very upset because she couldn't get her hair arranged the way she wanted. I offered her my hair dryer, but that made her even more upset. She shouted at me, "That won't get my hair right!" A few minutes later my youngest daughter came down the stairs in tears. It seems that on waking her up Mary had been very rough with her. I told Mary that she shouldn't take her frustrations out on others but that made her even more angry and she accused me of taking sides.

As I drove Mary to school, neither of us were speaking, and when we arrived there, she got out of the car without a word and slammed the door. By the time I got to Mass that

morning I was in a bad mood; I was so angry with my daughter that instead of paying attention to the readings, I was planning the lecture I was going to give her after school. "She should learn to control her temper, but she should also learn to apologize and make up for the hurt that she was responsible for," I thought.

It was almost time for communion when a little voice inside me surfaced, reminding me that unless I decided to make peace with my daughter I would have to 'leave my gift at the altar...' (Cf. Mt. 5:23).

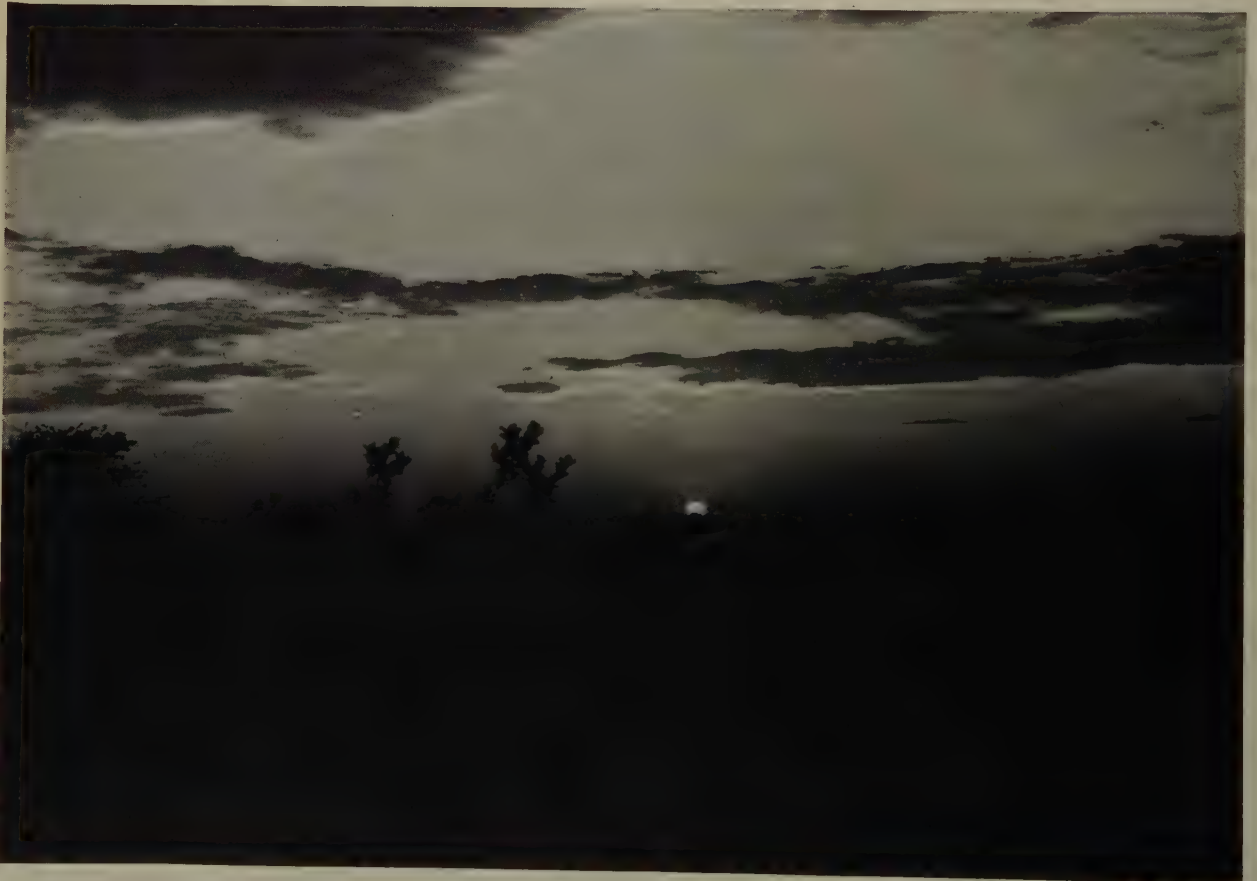
I had to admit, though, that I was stubborn, too. I began to argue inside with God, "But why me? She's the one who's wrong. She's the one who has to learn." But the little voice inside insisted that I be the one to forgive — that forgiveness and love could solve this problem. I knew I had to forgive before going to receive communion — and I did. Then I was filled with peace.

After school I decided to try it God's way and not mine. As soon as I picked her up from school, I sensed her anger was still there. So I said, "Mary, I'm sorry our morning got off to such a bad start." To my surprise and delight she turned to me immediately with a big smile and said, "I'm sorry too. I really wasn't mad at you; I was just frustrated with my hair." The beauty of our relationship was immediately restored.

D. Y.

What does he gain who refuses the cross?
He increases its weight.
But he who embraces it, and bears it with patience,
lightens its weight, and the weight itself
becomes a consolation;
for God abounds with grace to all those who carry the
cross with good will in order to please him.

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS



FAMILY LIFE

Weakened family life is one of the greatest social ills of our time.

The "New Family" Movement has as its aim to bring the Focolare spirit of unity into family life, so that each family will be deeply united within itself and with other families.

THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT

Christmas is a time for the family to be together and last Christmas our family went away to spend the holidays with a special friend. This year we received the same invitation. "Great," I thought, because last Christmas had been very special. But my teenage son and daughter had different thoughts, "We should stay home," they said. "We want to be with our friends at Christmas; we missed them last year. Who wants to go away from home at Christmas anyway!"

Ever since I learned the meaning of the word unity I have tried to put it into practice with both these young people. I have spent hours listening to loud music, watching their favorite T.V. programs and trying my best to be with them and take an interest in their things. "Now," I thought, "it's my turn," so I stood my ground. But all the same I did not feel at peace inside and I could tell that they didn't either.

One day, after a long session with my son on the subject of the holidays, I realized I was getting nowhere and, more importantly, that I wasn't loving. "I've got to 'make myself one' with them, no matter what the cost," I thought; so I went to them and said, "It's O.K. We don't have to go away for Christmas. We can stay home." I felt at peace with myself for the first time in weeks.

Ten minutes later my son walked into the room where I was working and said, "Mom, we all have to get away and do

our own thing every once in a while. Now it's your turn. We can go away for Christmas as a family. My friends won't miss me for a few days only anyway. And mom ... I love you." I couldn't remember the last time this nineteen year old had said that.

E.R.

"YOU'VE GOT IT!"

One of our sons was going through a difficult period and he seemed to be upset a lot of the time. One morning as he was getting ready for school he seemed upset with everything and complaining a lot. The discord that it was causing in the family was particularly irritating to me.

As we were getting in the car to go to school the thought struck me that I was loving harmony in our family more than I was loving my son. I resolved to really make an effort to love my son by "making myself one" ¹ with him as much as I could.

When he came home that afternoon I asked him how it had gone at school. He started telling me about their kickball game. He gave me all the details and the scores and who did what and when. He went on and on and I listened with the effort of making his game my own. This went on everyday after school. One day he was telling me his usual stories and I realized that he was talking to me as I was carrying the laundry basket to the dryer. I thought, "This isn't love for

him," so I put the basket down and sat next to him and listened.

Other times when he was talking and others would come in, I made sure that they didn't interrupt him and I would ask them to wait until he had finished talking. I felt that our relationship was improving and that he was calming down. One evening as I was preparing dinner, the telephone kept ringing, the baby wanted me to take him outside, and so on. When I was finally able to take the baby outside, this son came out and asked me to pitch a few balls to him, so I became a pitcher. When I had to go in to finish preparing dinner, he stayed outside with the baby and played with him. I began noticing in the next few days that he was helping me more and really calming down.

One day I told him that I had noticed how much he was helping with his little brother and how I thought he must feel about it since he is the middle child. He realized I understood how he felt and exclaimed, "You've got it!"

Then one day he did something wrong and I gave him a rather stiff punishment. Normally, he would have taken it very badly and been angry about it, but this time he was even able to laugh about it later. I could see that our relationship had grown enough in the last few weeks to be able to withstand this test, and that the bond of unity between us had not been broken.

1) Cf. 1 Cor. 9:22.

J. Z.

The young and the Gospel

When my friends and I were playing jump rope at recess time in school we played hot pepper. Everybody got a turn. When it was my turn I only got 2 jumps. The others told me I was out but I argued that they had given another girl a second chance. They gave me an excuse for that and I was really mad. Then I told myself, "Don't argue, just love them." When it was one of the girls' turn I had the temptation to twirl the rope really fast but then I thought, no. She jumped very well and I was happy. When it was my turn again I goofed up but my hundredfold was that the other girls let me have another chance.

Margaret
11 years old

At school two of my friends had an argument. One of them came up to me and started telling me bad things that I knew weren't true about the other girl. I was afraid to say

anything to her though because maybe she would like the other girl better or would think I was taking sides. But I knew that it was more important to love so I tried to explain to her that the things she was saying weren't true. I was really surprised and happy when she said to me, "You're right. I shouldn't be talking about other people."

Maryrose
12 years old

It was the day before our Christmas party in school and we were going to have a gift exchange. First I was worried because I didn't know what to give to my classmate. I have a lot of extra things that I don't really use but they all have a story. So I tried to think about it really hard and I realized that I didn't really need all these things. I took the wrapping paper and made a gift for my friend. I was really glad because I felt I was loving Jesus.

Maria Stella
13 years old

I was sitting in math class getting a head start on my homework when the girl next to me asked me for a pencil. The only one I had was the one I was using. I looked at her and I knew that there was Jesus present in her. If Jesus were asking me for a pencil I would give him one of course. So I gave her the pencil I was using and I decided to finish my Math at home.

Another chance that I had to love Jesus in my neighbor was at school at lunch time. I was with two girls, finishing up my lunch, when they started to talk about a girl who was sitting in front of us. They were saying that she always butts into other people's conversations and expects everyone to listen. I had to love Jesus in my two friends but also in the girl in front of us. So I said, "Well, maybe she has no one to talk to. Maybe she needs someone to listen to her." I was very happy to see that they seemed to understand what I was saying, and they stopped talking about her."

Amy
14 years old



What is the Focolare Movement?

THE BEGINNINGS

FOCOLARE means "hearth," "family fireside." What first strikes people when they come in contact with members of the Focolare, whether in small groups or in large gatherings, is the atmosphere of a family. It is a family formed by many different people in various walks of life. The Focolare Movement is also known as the "Work of Mary." Under this name it was approved by Pope John XXIII in 1962.

The Focolare Movement began in 1943 in Italy. In the midst of the terrible destruction of World War II, Chiara Lubich realized that God is the only one worth living for. As a result, she began to center her life on the Gospel, together with a small group of young women who followed her. Their ideal became one of striving toward the fulfillment of Jesus' last prayer to the Father: "May they all be one" (Jn.17:21).

The life of Chiara and her first companions, and the spiritual way they spontaneously followed, gave rise to the unique form of spirituality of the Focolare Movement, a spirituality of unity. It has proved to be a powerful means of introducing the Gospel into modern life, of going to God together.

WHO ARE THE FOCOLARINI

Single men and women live in separate communities called Focolare Centers. Their principal aim is to achieve unity among themselves through mutual charity practiced twenty-four hours a day. They follow the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. They work as other laymen and women in regular jobs and professions.

Some married persons, even though continuing to live in their families, participate fully in the life of either the men's or women's Focolare Centers in their common effort to achieve this same unity. They are called "Married Focolarini" and form the backbone of a vast Movement within the Movement, called the New Family Movement.

THE VOLUNTEERS AND THE NEW HUMANITY MOVEMENT

The Volunteers, also called the "Volunteers of God," are a large group within the Focolare Movement; they would like to transform all human realities according to the Gospel spirit. The Volunteers are the backbone of the mass movement called New Humanity. The aim of this Movement is to help form a society made of men and women who are made "new" by the Gospel message and who can then bring new life to all fields of human activity (education, business, etc.). This results in new social relationships which, in turn, lead to the realization of new structures of society.

GEN

The new generations of the Focolare Movement form another Movement or, better, three movements: the Gen 2, the Gen 3 and the Gen 4 Movements, divided according to their various age groups. "Gen" stands for new generation. The Gen have committed themselves to living the Gospel message of love and to sharing with other youth the conviction they have that the Gospel is the answer to every question and the motive for everything they do.

THE MOVEMENT AMONG THE RELIGIOUS

Men and women religious — although they live according to their own rules and constitutions and are already a distinct part of the Church through their religious families — can also be associated with the Focolare.

Contact with the Movement helps them to focus their attention on the specific charism of their founders, and to see how it can be lived in the present time.

PRIESTS — PRIESTS' MOVEMENT — SEMINARIANS — PARISH MOVEMENT

Many diocesan priests are committed to living the spirituality of the Focolare Movement. Some of them live in community. They form the backbone of the Priests' Movement which is made up of priests who live the spirituality of unity.

FOCOLARE FAMILY

The largest group within the Focolare Movement is made up of men, women and young people who are connected with the Movement without having any formal ties with it. Their bond of unity stems from their acceptance of its spirit and their desire to live it.

ECUMENISM

The Movement not only crossed the political boundaries of more than 100 countries, it has also gone beyond the barriers erected for centuries between the various Christian Churches.

Ecumenical activities take place in the different parts of the world where the Movement exists.

In the past few years a promising, ongoing dialogue has been established with faithful of other religions.

SUMMER MARIAPOLIS

Summer meetings are held every year for those interested in the Movement and for those who wish to come into contact with it. For one week persons of all ages and walks of life are exposed to the spirituality of unity. Above all, they strive to practice it by creating among themselves a rapport that molds them into a community. It is intended to be a basic experience of such intense unity that the people will be able to bring it back into their own environments. And this is the most striking fruit of these conventions. They tend to be models of a world which lives according to the Gospel.

PERMANENT MARIAPOLIS

The need to prolong the experience of the summer meetings brought about the birth of small cities called Permanent Mariapolis. They are made up of young men and women, as well as whole families, who are there for a designated period of time to be formed according to the Gospel spirit of unity.

They also attend classes in Sacred Scripture, Theology and Sociology and work for their own support.

MARIAPOLIS CENTERS

In addition to the Permanent Mariapolis, there are Mariapolis Centers, which are training centers for the members of the Movement.

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